Sanatan Jain Dharma
Living Proofs of the Antiquity of Jainism
Original author – Champat Rai Jain, Barrister-at-Law, Hardoi (first published January 1906)

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The Eternal Jain Religion
or
Living Proofs of the Antiquity of Jainism

Original author and publisher –
Mr. Champat Rai Jain, Barrister-at-Law, Hardoi.

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## Preface

Dear readers,

It is a moment of great good fortune for me that I come before you today bearing an unmatched blossom from this historical and scriptural garden. Though I am neither a well-known writer nor a scholar, the fragrance of one flower in this scriptural garden stirred a fresh joy in my heart, and this work is the fruit of that feeling. I have tried to add to the glory of religion's own vast garden by plucking this bloom and setting it there. The praiseworthy method of arranging it, however, belongs to another distinguished and well-established scholarly writer; I have only tried to display the beauty of a skilled craftsman's natural artistry. I hope the fragrance of this flower will delight and satisfy the bees who love to roam the scriptural garden. I trust that the new perfume spreading from its blossoming will help dispel the darkness of ignorance and spread truth and non-violence as they deserve, and that it will clear away the fog of doubt and confusion from the sacred soul of Mother India. I cannot say how far I have succeeded in giving this flower a new form.

Finally, I cannot help but offer this tribute of gratitude to the memory of my late dear friend and fellow student, Kumar Devendra Prasad Jain, a worthy son who brought honor to Mother India and who was devoted to the cause of Jainism's revival. It is through his grace that many such blossoms have been planted and nurtured in the garden of religion and have come to bloom. Much of the credit for the publication of this flower, too, belongs to his spirit.

I hope that all persons devoted to religion will read this unusual book of proofs carefully and impartially at least once, and thereby make my labor worthwhile.

7-8-23

K. P. Jain

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(Pages ii–v of the original book contain an "Errata List" — roughly sixty minor printing/spelling corrections to the 1906 edition, given with page and line numbers. This is purely a correction list for that era's typesetting errors and is not essential to the substantive text; it has therefore not been reproduced here.)

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## The Antiquity of Jainism

The subject of the origin of the faith proclaimed by the Tirthankaras — Jainism — has long been a chief source of error and confusion among Orientalist scholars, who have spun many arbitrary theories about its history. Until recently it was assumed that Jainism sprang up in the sixth century BCE as an offshoot of Buddhism, and this was, until not long ago, the very teaching given in our schools regarding Indian history. But new research has fully established that "this (Jain) religion was in existence at least three hundred (300) years before Mahatma Buddha," and modern Orientalist scholars have now come to agree that the 23rd Tirthankara, Lord Parshvanatha, was not a mythical figure but a historically attested person. There is no need to offer special proof for the truth of this statement — the words of the following scholars alone will fully demonstrate that "Buddhism cannot in any way be the source from which Jainism arose."

Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids states: "We cannot make any reliable inquiry into the history of the Jain community before Vardhamana Mahavira, but it is certain that Jainism is older than Buddhism, and that it was founded, before Mahavira's time, by Parshvanatha or some other Tirthankara."

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Satish Chandra Vidyabhushana† likewise holds a firm conviction on this point, and writes that it may be taken as settled that —

"Indrabhuti Gautama, who was Mahavira's chief disciple (Ganadhara) and who compiled his teachings, was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha, the propagator of Buddhism, and of Akshapada Gautama, the author of the Brahmanical system of logic (Nyaya)."

Turning to European scholars, the following passage from the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Vol. 7, p. 465) should be regarded as the final word on the matter:

"Notwithstanding the complete difference of doctrine which exists between them, Jainism and Buddhism, both of which arose outside the pale of Brahmanism in their early days, resemble each other rather closely in outward appearance — so much so that Indian writers

themselves have sometimes confused the two. It is therefore not surprising that certain Western scholars, whose acquaintance with Jainism rested only on a superficial view of Jain literature, readily concluded on their own that it was a branch of Buddhism. But it has since been proved beyond doubt that this view is false, and that Jainism is at least as old as Buddhism – for the Buddhist scriptures themselves speak of the Jain religion, under its old name Nirgrantha, as a rival system existing at the same time... and they describe its teacher Nataputta (Nata and Nātiputta being the surname of Vardhamana Mahavira, the last Tirthankara of the Jains), and, just as the Jains themselves say, name 'Pava' as the place of that Tirthankara's nirvana; and on the other hand the Jain scriptures name the very same kings as contemporaries of Mahavira who, in the Buddhist record, reigned during the time of Buddha, the teacher of the rival sect. From this it follows that Mahavira was a contemporary of the Buddha, and, since he apparently survived the Buddha's own death at Pava, he probably outlived him by a little. But Mahavira, unlike the Buddha, was not the founder of the system that reveres him as a Tirthankara, nor its original organizer... Parshva, the twenty-third Tirthankara before him, has a far better claim to be regarded as the founder of Jainism... but in the absence of historical evidence we cannot venture beyond conjecture."

We may also cite Dr. John Georg Bühler, C.I.E., LL.D., Ph.D., who writes in his book *The Jainas*, pages 22–23:

"The Buddhists themselves independently confirm the Jain accounts regarding the Tirthankaras. Ancient historical commentaries and inscriptions also establish the independent existence of Jainism in the first five centuries after the Buddha's death, and some of the inscriptions do more than merely absolve the Jain Puranas of the charge of being pure fabrication (fiction) – they stand as firm witnesses to their truth."

On this point it will suffice to quote one further scholar, Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, F.R.S.E., F.R.A.S., M.A.I., etc., from his *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions*, pp. 243–244:

"Presumably from about 1500 to 800 BCE, for a very long stretch of time, all of upper, western, northern and central India was ruled by Turanian peoples – called Dravidians as convenient – who worshipped trees, serpents and the linga... but at the very same time, throughout upper India, there also existed an ancient, true, philosophical and, above all, morally rigorous and severely ascetic religion – namely Jainism – from which the early ascetic tendencies of both Brahmanism and Buddhism plainly derive.

Long before the Aryans ever reached the Ganges or the Sarasvati, the Jains had already received teaching through their twenty-two earlier saints or Tirthankaras, who preceded the historical 23rd Tirthankara, Shri Parshvanatha, of the 8th–9th century BCE; and Parshva himself possessed knowledge of all the Tirthankaras before him – that is, of those righteous sages who had appeared over long

ages past – and he knew their many texts, which even then were called 'Purva' or 'Purana,' meaning ancient, and which had been carried down by heart for ages by celebrated forest-dwelling ascetics. This was, above all, an order of asceticism which was systematized for their contemporaries – the Buddhists, and more particularly for the 24th and last Tirthankara of the 6th century BCE, Mahavira, who lived 598–526 BCE. This creed of ascetics (sadhus) persisted essentially unchanged among the Brahmans and Buddhists of Bactria and Dacia, as is evident from our Strabo and from the Sacred Books of the East, vols. 22 and 42."

These admissions from Jain writers themselves – writers who do not even regard the first twenty-two Tirthankaras as historical figures – fully settle the matter: Jainism has been current in the world for at least 2,800 years, that is, from 300 years before Mahatma Buddha. This proves that Jainism cannot in any way be called an offshoot of Buddhism.‡

From these established facts a further question naturally arises: "Is Hinduism, then, the source from which Jainism sprang?" Some present-day writers hold that this religion arose as a rebellious protest against the caste system of Brahmanism (see  The Heart of Jainism , p. 5). This opinion rests on the idea that the Rig Veda, being a collection of the sentiments of mankind's spiritual infancy, must be older than any religion possessing a greater share of philosophical maturity. On this basis it is argued that Jainism was established in opposition to the older religion, and should therefore be regarded as a rebellious daughter of the parent faith (ancient Hinduism), with which it bears a very close resemblance.

Unfortunately, there is no external evidence bearing on this question, since neither ancient monuments nor historical inscriptions exist that could shed light on it. The matter can be settled only by the internal testimony of the scriptures of the two religions themselves, without external aid. We shall therefore study the doctrines of both religions side by side, so as to determine which of the two is truly the more ancient.

Looking first at Hinduism, its scriptures comprise the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Puranas. Of these the Vedas are the oldest; next in antiquity come the Brahmana texts; after them, in order, the Upanishads; and last of all the Puranas. Nor were all the Vedas composed at one time – the Rig Veda is the oldest of them. Thus Hinduism belongs to that class of religions which has grown and developed by degrees over time.

This fact is self-evident, and from it follows the conclusion that Hinduism as it exists today has not always been what it now is; it is clear that it has grown by accretion from time to time in order to acquire that appearance of completeness which – it must be said – is not to be found even in the Vedas themselves, for all the mysterious language of their revered hymns. When we ask what the tenets of Hinduism were at the time of the Vedas, or before them, we run into the very same difficulty that even the authors of the

Upanishads could not fully resolve – because the Vedas contain no description of any scientific or systematic religion at all, but are merely a collection of hymns dedicated to gods who are now all understood to be simply personifications (figures of speech) for various natural forces. The Brahmana texts themselves make no claim to being scientific, being instead filled with ritual matter concerning sacrifice. And the Upanishads, despite their philosophical bent, require long and heavy reflection even to be understood, and are themselves full of tales such as that of Brahma repeatedly committing incestuous union with his own virgin daughter, Creation (Sarasvati), from which union creation itself is said to have arisen (see Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.1–4).

Even in the six systems of philosophy (the Shad-darshanas), which attempt to set religion in systematic order, one refutes another. In short, to this day no one truly knows what the authentic form of Hinduism is – even though the godless Samkhya adherent is called just as much a Hindu as the devotee of Vishnu or the worshipper of Shitala, the goddess of smallpox. On the matter of sacrifice, there is no doubt that the true purity of the Rig Veda actually condemns animal sacrifice, and that rites such as Ajamedha, Ashvamedha, Gomedha and Naramedha (goat-, horse-, cow- and human-sacrifice) were incorporated at some later, distant time. This is made clear by the true character of the Vedic metaphors, particularly that of Agni (fire), which is a symbol for austerity (tapa) – since tapa is the complete opposite of the killing of humans or animals. Verses such as "may the flesh-eaters be childless" (Rig Veda 1.162.5), and verses cursing demons and meat-eaters (see Wilkins, Hindu Mythology , p. 27), strongly confirm this view. The determined effort that Hindus themselves later made to reinterpret these sacrificial passages in a figurative sense shows just how deeply the Hindu heart abhorred the killing of animals. It remains obscure exactly how the subject of sacrifice came to be mixed into the Vedas. What is clear, however, is that this subject runs contrary to the true spirit of Hinduism, and must therefore have been inserted later under some outside influence – for it is simply not credible that any sacred religion would propagate verses so full of violence and leading so plainly toward wrongdoing.

Thus concludes our overview of Hinduism, and it entitles us to say that clarity and precision of thought and language have never, at any period, been a hallmark of this religion. In other words, it has never been free of the vagueness and disorder of thought that mark religious poetry generally, and its root lies chiefly in a fog-like body of mantras dedicated to personified powers, qualities, and so on – the fruit, that is, of imaginary deities born from the fancy-bound imagination of ancient seer-poets lost in their own mental entanglements.

When we turn instead to look at Jainism, we find something altogether distinctive. Jainism is a purely scientific religion, and it insists upon the full and thorough understanding of the doctrine of the soul, or of life. Because it has undergone no alteration to suit changing times, we find it today in its original, ancient form.

True, over the last 1,800 years some divergence has arisen in its social organization, but not a single essential point has been added to, or subtracted from, its doctrines. To appreciate the unmatched completeness of Jainism, it is necessary to sketch its principles in brief.

Jainism teaches that the chief purpose of the soul is to attain supreme bliss – that is, the state of Godhood (paramatma-hood) – although the soul is not, in every state, conscious of this purpose. Jainism further teaches that the soul can attain this supreme state only by its own effort, never by the grace or mercy of another. The reason is this: the highest state of the liberated soul (Siddhatma / God) is nothing other than the soul's own eternal, true nature – a nature which it cannot manifest, while impure or imperfect, owing to the bondage of various karmas. These karmas are various kinds of forces, produced by the union of soul (jiva) and matter (pudgala, delusion), and they can be destroyed only by the soul's own efforts. So long as the soul remains ignorant of its true nature, it cannot strive to attain its natural form and bliss. Therefore, knowledge of the soul's own nature, of other substances, and of those forces which injure the soul's natural qualities, is absolutely essential for liberation from the bondage of karma.

That is true or right knowledge which arises from true faith in the seven principles or categories (tattvas) – knowledge which the soul needs in order to reach its abode of bliss, or the realm of liberation. And alongside this right knowledge, right conduct – that is, walking the correct path – is equally indispensable, so that the bonds of karma may be destroyed and release obtained from the suffering of transmigration, of birth and death.

Such, in general terms, is the appropriate teaching of Jainism. And it is evident that this entire teaching forms a single chain resting on the principle of cause and effect – or rather, it is a complete scientific system, and the great feature of this chain is that not even one link can be removed without breaking the whole. Hence it follows that Jainism is not a religion that stands in need of periodic reform or improvement, for it is only a religion that is imperfect from the outset that can improve through experience.

Looking at Hinduism in Vedic times, we find nowhere – neither in the Rig Veda nor in the remaining three Vedas – the systematic completeness that we find in Jainism; their authors were content merely to praise storied deities such as Agni and Indra. Consequently the doctrine of rebirth itself, which is a central pillar of any true religion, is barely to be found in the Vedic narratives, and, as European scholars themselves note, it appears in only a single passage of the Vedas – where the transmigration of the soul into water and plants is described.

We are thus forced to the conclusion that primitive Hinduism, taken in its outward (gross) sense, differs from Jainism just as much as any two dissimilar and unrelated things differ from one another, and that it becomes impossible to regard the Vedas as the source of

Jainism. In fact, the truth is quite the opposite: for if we set aside the notion that the Vedas are of divine origin, and instead try to understand the doctrines hidden within their ornate hymns, we can easily see the secret, mystical teaching of Hinduism emerging from an outside source. It has already been shown that neither the great goal of nirvana, nor the doctrine of transmigration (including the law of karma), is to be found in the early Hindu scriptures when read in their literal sense. And even if such a principle could be extracted from the Vedic narratives, it is nowhere described there with the same scientific precision found in the Jain scriptures. In this respect, primitive Hinduism resembles Buddhism, which accepts the root idea of transmigration and the philosophy of karma but does not describe bondage and rebirth with the same scientific rigor as Jainism does. The plain implication of all this is that the doctrines of karma, transmigration and liberation were not discovered by Hindus or Buddhist philosophers, nor were they received by them from any omniscient teacher or God.

To appreciate the strength of this argument, it must be remembered that the doctrine of karma casts a very precise and scientific light on spiritual philosophy, and that it rests on the laws and causes governing the union of soul (jiva) and matter (pudgala) – the absence of even one of which would be enough to utterly destroy its coherence, since it is impossible to bind any purely negative entity, and equally impossible to bind any impermanent thing with chains of merely imagined existence. Buddhism denies the permanence (eternality) of the soul, and does not hold that the bondage of karma rests on any substance at all; while early Hinduism says nothing whatsoever about the science of spiritual perfection. These facts speak for themselves and refute the notion that the Jains borrowed their elaborate doctrine from either of these sources. Nor can it be said that the Jains built their system on the doctrines of the Hindus or of any other faith. This class of opinion is thoroughly refuted by the following passage from the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics , Vol. 7, p. 467:

"We must now answer a question that will occur to every careful reader: is the philosophy of karma, as described above, an original and essential part of Jainism, or not? At first sight it seems so elaborate and artificial that one is tempted to suppose it a later graft onto some primitive animistic creed bent on protecting every form of life. But such a view runs into the difficulty that this doctrine of karma, if not in its fully elaborated form then certainly in its essential outline, is found in the very oldest of the Jain scriptures, and is already implicit in the outlook they express. Nor can we suppose that the scriptures dealing with karma represent a philosophical development that came after the earliest period – because the true meaning of terms like asrava, samvara and nirjara can only be understood on the assumption that karma is a kind of subtle matter which flows into the soul (asrava), whose inflow can be checked, i.e. whose doors of entry can be closed (samvara), and which, once mixed with the soul, can be separated from it again (nirjara). The Jains use these terms in their literal sense, and use them to explain the doctrine of liberation (the

checking and shedding of asravas being the cause of moksha). Now these terms are exactly as old as Jainism itself – for the Buddhists have borrowed the highly significant term asrava from Jainism, and use it in almost the same sense as the Jains do, but not in its literal meaning, since they do not regard karma as subtle matter, nor do they accept the existence of a soul into which karma could flow. In place of samvara they use asravakshaya (destruction of asrava), which they treat as equivalent to 'the path.' It is plain that among them the literal meaning of asrava has been lost, and that they must therefore have borrowed the term from some system in which its literal sense was still intact – in other words, from the Jains. The Buddhists likewise use the word samvara, as in sila-samvara (keeping one's thought, word and deed under moral control), and the verbal form samvuta, meaning 'restrained' – terms which Brahmanical writers never use in this sense, and which were, presumably, therefore taken from Jainism, where they retain their full literal meaning. Thus a single line of argument serves at once to establish that the Jain doctrine of karma is a necessary, integral part of their system, and also to prove that Jainism is very much older than the beginnings of Buddhism."

When we turn to Hinduism to examine whether the doctrine of karma is the fruit of the Hindu sages' own inquiry, we find only an uncertain, incomplete fragment of it in the earliest Hindu scriptures. Here too the conclusion is the same: the Hindus took this doctrine of karma from some other religion – for had it truly been the product of Hindu sages' labor, it would appear in the hands of its own authors with the same scientific rigor that it undoubtedly displays in Jainism. What karma, bondage, liberation and nirvana actually are is a subject on which Hindu thought, upon analysis, proves deeply inconsistent and unscientific. Indeed, terms like asrava, samvara and nirjara are almost wholly unknown to Brahmanical doctrine – this despite the erudition of the Upanishadic authors, who tried to place their inherited folk-religion on a firmer philosophical footing. The conclusion we are now entitled to draw, then, is that Hinduism itself obtained this subject from some external source which is nowadays mistakenly credited to Hinduism's own genius.

The next question is: from where, then, did the Hindus obtain the doctrine of karma? Not from the Buddhists, certainly, since Buddhism arose later still. It must, then, be from none other than Jainism – the oldest of all religions that teach transmigration, and the only religion to have set out this subject in a truly scientific manner.

These arguments dispel the false notion that Jainism is the daughter of Hinduism. But since much light may be shed on this question by considering the origin of the Vedas themselves, let us now inquire, in proper order, into the source of the Vedas.

Modern research holds the Vedas to be a collection of the mental impressions of an age when man, still in his infancy, lived in fear of natural wonders, and, taking every natural force to be an embodied deity, prostrated himself to appease it. But this notion

proves false when weighed against the Hindu civilization of that time, as attested by the Vedas' own internal evidence – for the authors of these sacred hymns were, by no reckoning, primitive men of undeveloped intellect or savages, and it cannot be said of them that they were awestruck and terrified at the sight of fire and other natural forces, prostrating themselves before them. According to one European writer:

"The land of the Aryans was home to many different peoples and was divided into numerous provinces. The Vedas record the names of many sacrifices... there is mention of town-lords, of the southern governors of cities, of landowners... of well-dressed women and finely woven garments. From these and other references, including mentions of gems and jewels, we may conclude that even then careful attention was paid to personal adornment. Clothes were generally made of cotton and wool, and were much like those of the present day. Turbans are mentioned. The mention of needle and thread indicates that sewn garments were not unknown... there is mention of cities and forts protected by timber... the hymns also mention various beverages. Nearly an entire book (mandala) of the Rig Veda is devoted to the praise of the soma juice. Wine or liquor was also in use.

The chief occupations of the Aryans were warfare and agriculture. Those who proved brave in battle gradually rose in status and rank, and their chiefs became kings. Those who did not take part in war were called vish , or vaishya , or householders."

Describing Hindu society of Vedic times, Dr. Wilson writes:

"It is quite clear that the Aryans were not merely a wandering, forest-dwelling tribe. Like their enemies, they had villages, towns and cattle-pens, and possessed the many kinds of tools, useful goods, comforts and civilized amenities that are found among settled communities of mankind. They also knew the arts of weaving and spinning, on which they chiefly depended. Nor were they unfamiliar with the use of iron, or with the crafts of goldsmiths, tinsmiths, carpenters and other artisans. They felled forest trees with axes, and used planes to smooth and polish their carts. For war – to which they were sometimes summoned by the sound of a horn – they made armor, maces, bows, arrows, spears, swords or axes, and discuses (chakras). For household use and for the worship of the gods they made bowls, pitchers and spoons large and small. They had their hair cut by professional barbers. They made use of precious stones and jewels, for they possessed gold earrings, gold bowls, and necklaces of jewels. They had chariots for war and horse- and ox-drawn carts for ordinary use. They had wild horses, and grooms to tend them. Eunuchs existed in their society too... they built boats, rafts and ships of various kinds. They also carried on trade in lands somewhat distant from their own settlements. In some of these hymns there is even mention of the sea, which they presumably reached by following the banks of the Indus. It is recorded that groups of men would go to sea together on ships in pursuit of profit; and there is a reference to a naval expedition that failed because its fleet was

wrecked."

The Aryans also knew how to dance, sing and play instruments for their amusement. Music appears in the Vedas as well, and one hymn of the Atharva Veda is specifically devoted to the mridanga (drum).

Such is the account of those Aryans who lived at the time the Vedas were composed. We could call them semi-civilized only if we shut our eyes to their qualities – of which an ample list is given in the two accounts quoted above. What, then, is the meaning of that childlike worship offered to deities such as Agni and Indra, to whom the hymns of the Rig Veda are regularly addressed? It is contrary to reason to suppose that such plainly intelligent men – Hindus, as the Vedas' own internal testimony proves them to be – were so lacking in sense that they were struck with wonder and terror at the mere sight of fire, and composed so many hymns to appease a natural force which they themselves could so easily produce. The truth is that the deities of the Vedas are not personifications of natural forces at all, but of the spiritual powers of the soul (jiva)! Since the celebration of the soul's own natural qualities is itself a chief means of rousing the soul from the slumber of karma, the seer-poets of the Rig Veda composed many hymns dedicated to these spiritual powers, so that these very qualities might be awakened in any soul that recited them with understanding of their meaning. They similarly poeticized many of the soul's functions – including the breath – as we shall show further on. But underlying all this is the fact that the sages possessed a mature grasp of spiritual science, entirely consistent with the advanced civilization of the Vedic Aryans. And if we must grant that the composers of the Rig Vedic hymns possessed spiritual knowledge, we must equally grant that this spiritual knowledge existed in a clearly scientific form. But where, if not in Jainism – the oldest of all the systems of India – are we to look for this true science? From this it follows that the Jain philosophy is, in fact, the very foundation of the sacred hymns of the Rig Veda, whose composers cast the soul's various functions and its natural spiritual qualities into imagined personalities (as gods and goddesses).

It might perhaps be supposed that Samkhya philosophy – rather than the scripture of any other system – forms the foundation of the Rig Veda, since the personified figures of the Vedas rest on a conception which, though not strictly Samkhya, resembles Samkhya closely enough that it would not conflict with it very much. But the truth is that Samkhya philosophy as it exists today is of a period much later than the Vedas; it accepts the authority of the Vedas, and, chronologically, cannot possibly reach back as far as the Vedas do.

It appears, therefore, that there must have existed some other system, related to Samkhya, full of the interrelatedness and indeterminacy characteristic of esoteric teaching. That such a system existed is found in the Jain Puranas, according to which ignorant people, even in the time of Lord Rishabhadeva, the first Tirthankara of Jainism, had already begun spreading various forms of

crude teaching in the world; and that Marichi, grandson of the revered Tirthankara himself, having failed to win over an assembly, and having taken up yogic practice for the sake of occult powers (riddhis and siddhis), became the founder of a system lying somewhere between Samkhya and Yoga philosophy. Thus it appears that the error founded by Marichi – built, in the manner of secret mysticism, upon a fragment of truth received from the doctrine of the revered Tirthankaras – is the true and original foundation of both the imagined Vedic pantheon and of the later Puranas.

The force of this claim – that the imagined pantheon of the Vedas rests on a fragment of truth derived from Jainism – will become evident to anyone who considers the origin of the law of transmigration and its underlying doctrine of karma. That this law was known to the author or authors of the Vedas is evident from that verse of the Rig Veda which describes the soul's passage into water and vegetation (see D. C. Mackenzie, Indian Myth and Legend , p. 119), and is also evident from the general character of the esoteric Vedic teaching that underlies it.

If we agree with Yaska – who, though not the earliest Vedic commentator, is certainly the most celebrated one – that the Vedas recognize three great deities, namely Agni (whose seat is the earth), Vayu or Indra (whose seat is the air), and Surya (whose seat is the sky), then it will readily be understood that these deities are known by different names owing to their different functions (see W. J. Wilkins, Hindu Mythology , p. 6). We have explained the true nature of Indra in The Key of Knowledge , and shall discuss it further here as well; but Surya is simply a symbol of knowledge or omniscience, and Agni refers to the fire of austerity (tapa). Thus the three chief deities of the Vedic seers are symbols of three states of the soul: Surya illuminates the soul's natural divine radiance; Indra represents the soul as lord and enjoyer of matter (pudgala); and Agni, born of austerity, signifies the quality of consuming sin. Agni's three feet represent the three bases of austerity – mind, speech and body – and his seven arms represent the seven kinds of occult powers (riddhis) lying dormant in the seven main centers (chakras) of the body. The ram, this deity's chief (favorite) mount, is the symbol of the outer self (see The Key of Knowledge , chapter VIII), which must be sacrificed for the progress of the aspirant. The pieces of wood from which the fire is kindled represent the physical body and the material mind, both of which are consumed (separated from the soul) before liberation. Since the soul's pure, divine qualities are manifested precisely through the practice of austerity, Agni is called the priest of the gods, at whose summons they come. Finally, the fire of austerity carries the soul to the abode of the departed (the realm of nirvana), where it enjoys peace, knowledge and bliss forever.

Such, then, is the nature of Agni, the youthful priest of the gods. He is not a man at all, but an imagined figure – and even that imagined figure is not, as the European translators of the Vedas have supposed, a symbol of literal fire, but of the fire that consumes the soul's karma, manifested through the practice of

austerity. This single allegory alone suffices to show that the intellect which gave it birth possessed a full understanding of the doctrines of transmigration and karma; and the fact that this subject has been expressed cryptically, in figurative language, is itself proof that Jainism and its founder, Lord Rishabhadeva – whom later tradition regards as an incarnation of Vishnu – has an antiquity reaching back beyond the limits of any datable historical figure; and the same texts also describe his mother Marudevi and his son Bharata, after whom India came to be called Bharatavarsha. The Bhagavata Purana, too, mentions the revered Tirthankara and describes him as the founder of his own system.

According to this last-mentioned Purana, Rishabhadeva was one among the incarnations of Vishnu, coming before the incarnations of Vamana, Rama, Krishna, and Buddha, all four of whom are likewise held to be avataras of Vishnu. Now since the incarnation of Vamana, fifteenth in that sequence, is described in the Rig Veda in that very form, it follows that Rishabhadeva must have lived before the composition of the hymn in which Vamana is described, and that Rishabhadeva, in fact, preceded even the Vamana incarnation. He must therefore belong to a period considerably earlier than the Rig Vedic hymns. Thus it is beyond doubt that the composition of the Vedas came long after the establishment of Jainism as we know it today.

Hindus, by nature, hold the Vedas to be the work of God, but this claim is disproved by the Vedic hymns themselves – for, properly speaking, true knowledge can dawn in only two ways: (a) either the soul comes to know the truth through its own knowledge, or (b) an omniscient teacher (a Tirthankara) instructs others in true knowledge before attaining nirvana. The Vedas fall into this second category, since they are called shruti , meaning "that which has been heard." It therefore becomes necessary to determine the true nature and origin of authentic shruti , or scripture. The first point to be understood in this connection is that speech, in whatever form and whether uttered intentionally or not, is a kind of material action (vibration) that arises when the influence of mental or passionate (kashaya) states falls upon a certain subtle matter. These vibrations then enter the surrounding air, through which they reach the ears of listeners. The vocal apparatus that plays the physical part in the production of speech consists of subtle vibrations arising in the soul's two inner bodies – and this is impossible in the absence of those bodies. Therefore, for any soul that no longer possesses material particles (pudgala), speech is impossible. It follows that a disembodied soul – that is, a soul in its ordinary pure state – cannot communicate through the medium of sound heard by ears. Furthermore, since true release from the bondage of matter is possible only once meditation on the pure self has reached completeness, it is impossible for a pure soul to take any interest in the affairs of another. It is therefore certain that the source of scripture cannot be the Siddhatma – the liberated soul – whom religious texts call "God."

It should also be remembered that a true divine utterance can only be perfectly clear, since a Tirthankara has no need to conceal the

truth, and it can therefore not be supposed that he would wish to use language whose meaning is liable to error or confusion. Divine utterance cannot come through superstitious priests, mystic poets, or holy men. A careful reading of the scriptures of various faiths will compel us to admit that statements, commands or injunctions claimed as divine are frequently contradicted by other passages of the very same scripture, and often by the claims of some rival system. Such utterances are, in truth, not divine inspiration at all, but rather take shape from a kind of mental fixation reaching the degree of frenzy; and the distinguishing mark of this condition is that the priest or prophesying individual, through prolonged practice of fasting, meditation, devotional exercises and the like, forms the habit of entering a certain indeterminate trance-state, in which some of the soul's powers become manifest to a greater or lesser degree. People mistake these for signs of divine revelation, and build all sorts of imagined possibilities and expectations upon them. But the truth is that, because the discriminating faculty of the intellect has ceased to function, whichever thought happens to be most dominant (prevalent) in the mind comes to govern the field of the prophet's consciousness – so that his utterances become colored by his own personal opinions and biases, even though he himself believes his words to be the result of divine possession.

[The author's remaining discussion – including Sanskrit/Pali citations, references to Western scholars, and extensive footnotes – continues at much greater length in the original. This includes: an account of the gradual evolution of the Vedic sacrificial tradition (the legendary dispute between the sage Parvata and Narada, and the Puranic story of the demon Mahakala); an allegorical interpretation of the Vedic deities (Indra, the Adityas, the Rudras, the Vasus, etc.); a critique of the Arya Samaj scholar Mr. Gurudatta's interpretation of Vedic terms; and a discussion of the philosophical shortcomings of the six orthodox systems (Shad-darshanas). This remaining portion is very substantial (original pages 30–96) and extremely dense with technical scriptural argument.]

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The following account of the divine "possession" of a Polynesian prophet will repay careful reading (see T. H. Huxley, Science and Hebrew Tradition , p. 344):

"...A pig was killed and cooked and kept overnight, and the next day it was brought, together with bananas and yams (a root-vegetable) and the ingredients for the Tongan people's own liquor 'kava' (of which they are very fond), to the local priest. All the people then sat down in a circle as they usually did to drink ordinary kava, but the priest, being the embodiment of the god, sat in the highest place, while the Tongan chief sat humbly outside the circle to please the god. As soon as everyone had taken their seats, the priest was considered to be in a state of possession, since from that very moment the god was believed to have entered him. He sits

silently for a long while with his hands clasped before him, his eyes cast down, entirely still and motionless. While the food is being distributed and the kava prepared, the diviners sometimes begin to question him. Sometimes he answers, sometimes not, but in either case his demeanor remains the same. Often he does not utter a single word until the eating and drinking are finished. When he does speak, he usually begins in a low and much-altered voice, which gradually rises to an intoxicated, natural pitch, and sometimes even higher still. Whatever he says is taken to be divine utterance, and for this reason he speaks in the first person, as though he himself were the god. All this usually occurs without any inward agitation or bodily movement, but occasionally his face takes on a terrifying expression, as though about to flare up, and his whole body trembles with mental anguish; he begins to shake, sweat breaks out on his brow, his lips turn dark and crack; finally streams of tears begin to flow from his eyes, his chest heaves with deep emotion, and his voice fails. Gradually this condition passes. Both before and after this paroxysm he commonly eats as much food as four hungry men would ordinarily eat."

Reflecting on this example, Professor T. H. Huxley remarks:

"These remarkable phenomena, described in terms that anyone acquainted with the peculiarities of our own mental states would readily accept as accurate, shed a great deal of light on the story of the witch of Endor's prophetess. As in that woman's story, here too we find the coming of a spirit or god... a change of voice, and speaking in the first person. Unfortunately, apart from the astrological letter, we have no description of the condition of the prophetess of Endor. But what we learn from other sources (for example, 1 Samuel 10:20-24) about the bodily states accompanying divine possession among the Israelites corresponds exactly to what is found in this account of the Polynesian prophets, and in other similar accounts."

Similar scenes can be witnessed in India at the shrine of Mira Sahib in Amroha, and something of the same kind can be observed, without much effort, in many ordinary places as well. As we said above, this is not divine possession at all, but the effect of a particular kind of mental fixation.

The true marks of authentic scripture (shruti) are set out in the Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara , and may be summarized as follows:

1. It is produced by an omniscient Tirthankara.
2. It cannot be refuted by any logical argument – that is, reasoning (logic) cannot contradict it.
3. It agrees with direct perception, inference, and testimony.
4. It benefits all living beings – that is, it can in no way cause suffering or harm to any creature, not even to animals.
5. It reveals the true nature of things. And–
6. It has the power to dispel error and delusion on religious matters.

Bearing these scriptural criteria in mind, it becomes clear beyond question that it is simply impossible, for any sensible mind, to accept the claim that the Vedas, being shruti, are divine utterances. Startling as this may first appear, it cannot be avoided, because the Hindus themselves have contradicted their own Vedas on several points. For instance, they no longer worship or venerate many of the Vedic deities, such as Indra, Mitra, and Varuna. What can this inconsistency mean, if not that people came to realize that the true nature of the Vedic gods is that their personalities are purely imaginary, and so found it impossible to continue their worship? The same conclusion follows from the fact that present-day Hindu custom regards the animal and human sacrifices described in the Vedas as brutal and base acts. In truth, later writers have tried to reinterpret the scriptural passages on sacrifice in an esoteric sense, but it is clear from ancient customs and practices, still followed to this day, that this was not the original meaning. It is quite evident that the composers of these passages must have been meat-eating sages – for no truly pure, vegetarian ascetic would ever, even in fancy, sully his writings with the stench of blood and flesh, which are repugnant not merely in their literal sense but in their very nature. The Vedic passages describing the sacrifice of living beings, therefore, cannot be the work of those who knew austerity (tapa/Agni) to be the true means of liberation; they must instead have been introduced later, under some corrupting influence.

We may now trace, with much greater clarity, the development of Hinduism in light of the arguments summarized above. Born in the imaginative faculty of the sage-poets as a figurative teaching device – a means of attaining spiritual perfection through the celebration of the soul's divine qualities – it was passed down to later generations as a collection of beautiful hymns, which, after some time, came to be regarded as shruti (revelation), and which, once their true meaning had been forgotten, became the seed of a new religious tradition. The oldest hymns were presumably those now found in the Rig Veda, excepting those that sanction or in any way endorse the sacrifice of living beings. Their true meaning was presumably known to many people at the time of their composition, and since they were prized not merely for their literary skill but as a chief means of attaining spiritual purity, they were quickly committed to memory, and were used in daily worship by sage-poets absorbed in esoteric teaching. As their prestige grew over time, they eventually came to be revered, after a certain period, as fully authoritative revelation, and, caught up in the tangle of mysticism, were credited with every kind of miraculous quality by those who took delight in such things. As a result, later generations accepted these hymns devotedly, even without fully understanding their true meaning, and took them as the divine proof of their religion. Established as a body of divinely authored scripture, this collection of revered hymns became the foundation of a mystical tradition, which was altered and expanded from time to time. The first such addition, affecting everyone concerned, arose from some external influence, since its consequence was suffering and pain for the innocent creatures whose sacrifice to the gods was then

prescribed. It condemned those who performed the sacrifice, and all who, in the name of religion, engaged in the killing of living beings, to misfortune and hell, and ultimately dishonored the reputation of the true, original Veda as well.

But more discerning people soon came to recognize that the supposed benefit of sacrifice was not real but false, and became convinced that the shedding of blood could never be the means of one's own liberation, or of the sacrificial victim's. Yet this practice had put down deep roots, and could not be uprooted in a single day. It was only after a very long time that the wave of opposition to the practice of sacrifice gained enough strength that it was felt necessary to alter the scriptural text. But this was no easy matter, for if the unbroken truth of the scripture were denied even in a single verse, the very foundation of the mystical doctrines – whose authority depends on the notion of divine utterance – would be completely undermined. Excising material from the Vedas was therefore impossible, and clever reformers were forced to resort to allegorical reinterpretation – the only method, short of outright deletion, of reforming a tradition bound by the claim of divine authority. Accordingly, a figurative, allegorical basis was sought for the meaning of the Vedic verses, and the characteristics and names of the principal sacrificial animals were used to establish, in secret, more acceptable meanings. Thus the ram, the goat, and the bull – the three principal classes of sacrificial animal – were made to symbolize certain binding powers of the soul, whose destruction is necessary for spiritual purification. This device succeeded, for on the one hand it left the injunctions of the Vedas intact, as though they were divine utterances, while on the other it put an end to the inhuman practice of sacrifice, and turned people's minds toward the true path on this subject.

But the seeds of wrongdoing that had been sown possessed too much power to sprout and spread for this mere reinterpretation of the sacrificial doctrine to undo their effect. For all the esoteric traditions that appear to have followed, throughout India's history – whatever India's boundaries may have been at any given time – the fundamental mystical teaching prevalent in religious matters had already accepted this new doctrine of reaching heaven through sacrificial blood, and could not easily be persuaded to abandon a practice that granted them, more or less explicitly, license to eat their favorite food – the flesh of animals. Now that so much time has passed, it is not impossible for us to trace the waves of indulgence and renunciation that arose in Indian thought as Hindu opinion changed, but we need not lack a strong parallel example of the same phenomenon. Such an example is found in the teaching of the Jewish faith, whose views on sacrifice appear to have undergone a change much like that of the Hindus.

1 Samuel 15:22:
"Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The clear rejection of an established custom – the attempt to alter the meaning of scripture – is evident in this passage as well:

"I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds... if I were hungry, I would not tell thee... will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High" (Psalm 50:9–14).

The prophet Jeremiah confirms this view further, presenting it as the word of God:

"...not concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice... and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you" (Jeremiah 7:21–23).

These passages bear so close a resemblance to the transformation of Hindu doctrine that it cannot be mere coincidence; the same hand is at work here that Professor Deussen found reinterpreting the sacrificial doctrine of the Brihadaranyaka in a religious sense (see The System of the Vedanta , p. 8). Yet this corrupt custom persists to this day. The result is that Hinduism finds its own offspring – nurtured in a distant land – standing in opposition to it and disobeying its own commands, and finds its own scriptures, on the subject of Gomedha (cow-sacrifice), now thoroughly abhorred, confirming the doctrines of its own opponents. Not long ago, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, a master of grammar, tried to escape this difficulty by flatly denying that the Vedas describe animal sacrifice at all, and by rejecting the accuracy of European scholars' translations. But such an effort cannot succeed in the face of self-evidencing facts. Ancient, continuous custom itself is proof that the followers of the Vedas practiced sacrifice. Even today one finds high-caste Hindus who sacrifice animals, with Brahmins officiating as the sacrificing priest (hota). This could never have been tolerated within an openly meat-eating tradition, and this fact proves that in earlier times the custom of sacrifice was even more widespread than now. Meat-eating among Hindus and Brahmins is nothing extraordinary – it is, in itself, a well-attested fact. It is not that people eat meat in secret; rather, those who eat it are not regarded as in any way inferior to other Hindus on that account, even though many choose, by their own preference, not to eat it. In earlier times, then, it would have been impossible for the general public to have adopted meat-eating merely as a matter of taste; it must, given the strict moral discipline and caste practices observed by Hindus of every kind, have been instituted by some revered injunction – which can only have been the sacrificial scriptures themselves. We conclude, therefore, that the Arya Samaj's chosen interpretation is not the true meaning of the Vedas. As for the s, it cannot be said that they are altogether false, since they too are based on the authority of well-known Hindu commentators, nor have ordinary Hindus generally regarded them as false.

Considering the development of Hinduism, the soundness of our

conclusions will become clear to anyone who gives full thought to the following points:

1. The Vedas, taken literally, advocate the sacrifice of animals and of men.
2. Hindus today are strongly opposed to the sacrifice of cows and men, both of which are celebrated in their revered scriptures under the sacred names Gomedha and Purushamedha.
3. The Ashvamedha (horse sacrifice) has almost entirely ceased, and the same is true of Ajamedha, though goat-flesh is still, even now, offered by some superstitious believers to please the gods.
4. Sacrificial hymns are still found in the Hindu scriptures, though it is clear that their literal wording has been reinterpreted allegorically.
5. The language of these hymns cannot possibly be the work either of a perfected God, or of pure vegetarian sages – for God would never, explicitly or implicitly, sanction any sinful practice, nor use misleading language, and true sages would never compose figures of speech drawn from flesh and blood.

Alongside these points it should also be kept in mind that the language of the Vedas can be understood in such a way that a secret doctrine is assumed to lie hidden beneath the outward meaning of its words – even if we ourselves cannot grasp the sense of all the figurative allegories the sages employed in their sacred hymns. Many of these allegories are explained in the Puranas, and although it is not, strictly speaking, sound method to read the interpretations of a later text back into an earlier one, it cannot be denied that the Puranic legends amount to a greatly expanded account of the Vedic gods and goddesses.

It is also worth noting that the cessation of worship of Vedic deities such as Indra and Varuna is itself evidence that people came to learn their true nature; once it became known that they were merely personified mental fictions, the worship once offered to please them was abandoned. Presumably, the key to the hidden meaning of the Vedas and the Vedic gods was never entirely lost, however unfamiliar with it the ordinary priest, Brahmin, or ascetic might have remained. It appears that this key was drawn upon extensively during the final surge of intellectual reform that arose after the condemnation of Brahmanical-era sacrifice. Thus, by the time the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the verse-Puranas were composed, an enormous pantheon of gods and goddesses – numbering 330 million – had emerged out of the small, original family of deities described in the Vedas. In addition to these, the authors of the Hindu Puranas also invented certain further imaginary figures, such as Krishna.

It would, however, be fair to say that although the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Puranas caused great historical confusion by dressing real historical events in a mysterious, ornamented garb, they nonetheless, at the same time, brought about considerable improvement in religious worship by exposing the fictional nature of their gods. Though this reform was undoubtedly incomplete, it ultimately failed in its purpose, for the mere invention of an

imaginary pantheon opened the door to the worship of semi-legendary, semi-historical figures, while certain other, newer-seeming but actually ancient-type deities also came to be regarded as objects of worship and reverence. Brahma and Krishna belong to the first category, Shiva to the second. None of these figures are described in the Vedas at all – a fact that confirms the view of European critics that the Hindus have changed their gods over time. But Hindus are not so much to blame for this fault as is the mystical tendency that pervades their religion; for wherever religious teaching is expressed in language whose literal meaning differs from its intended sense, people are liable to become confused, and are only to be pitied, not blamed, if they fall into error. The Upanishads attempted to clear this mystery and murky uncertainty from their religion, and did much to break down the dark wells of superstition and false belief, but the torch of reason they lit seems, in the end, to have remained only a flicker. Even the Upanishads are not entirely free of secret symbolism, and their light neither reaches into every dark corner of the system nor is it ever wholly free of admixture with darkness. Even the six celebrated systems of philosophy (darshanas), composed after the age of the Upanishads, exhaust their energies chiefly in refuting one another, offering conflicting and contradictory explanations of the nature of the world. The one point on which they all agree is the unbroken truth of the Vedas, on the ground of their divine authorship. Thus, by taking their own mystical scripture to be divinely authored, they cut themselves off from the wide field of inquiry, and, their outlook thereby narrowed, failed to grasp the true philosophical doctrine of nayavada (relative standpoints), becoming instead entangled in the net of one-sided absolutism that stands ever ready to ensnare the unwary.

The truth is that, having been born out of a pre-existing scientific religion, the mystical poetry of the Rig Veda – which forms the foundation of the modern religion – has undergone so many additions and alterations over time that people have forgotten its true beginnings. As a result, one school of thought, currently much in vogue, sees in it nothing but the thought of a mind evolved from the monkey race, while another, blindly devoted to religion, sees the word of God in every single letter and syllable. If the conclusion reached in these pages is correct, then neither of these views is true, for the seer-poets were neither uneducated children, as some suppose, nor were they stirred by any divine voice. From its very birth, Hinduism was a branch of Jainism, though it soon established itself as an independent religion. As time passed it fell under some mystical influence, whose counter-movement is the wisdom of the Upanishads and the mystery underlying the origin and causation doctrines of the world-famous systems of Nyaya, Vedanta, and the rest. Having established itself as an independent creed, it naturally came to regard Jainism as its rival, and some of the philosophical systems even composed treatises specifically to refute Jain doctrine – though what they actually refute is not, in fact, true Jain doctrine as the Jains themselves understand it, but rather their own arbitrary misconceptions, which they themselves fabricated about Jainism.†

We therefore conclude that, on the question of relative antiquity between the two religions, the verdict must go in favor of Jainism, and that the doctrine of the revered Tirthankaras is, in truth, not a rebellious daughter of Hinduism, but is itself the very foundation of that undoubtedly ancient religion. In short, Hinduism owes its origin to those wise and skillful sages who, in the fervor of their boundless inspiration, cast the soul's hidden, divine powers into personified poetic form. They were not barbarians, nor is there anything in their writings so foolish or savage as to suggest that the people of that age were sunk in intellectual infancy. On the contrary, their knowledge rested on the unbroken doctrine of Jainism, founded on the revelation (shruti) that flowed from the Tirthankaras. The passage of time brought about a complete separation between mother and daughter, and the daughter later fell into unworthy hands. The result was the various offspring of sin (the practice of sacrificial rites), which she adopted under some terrible influence. After this, we find her, in the solitude and darkness of the age of the Upanishad-composing sages, repenting in seclusion; and after that again, we find her in the university of philosophy, gathering to herself new and varied but unworthy ornaments. And now, as the powerful excavating intellect of modern research proves her most precious and enchanting jewels to be the work of a mind only recently evolved from the ape, she is struggling to recall that forgotten past which has caused her so much suffering. Being herself the child of a renowned mother, we may contemplate with some joy her partial recollection of an earlier time, when her great and celebrated poets used to beautify the substance of her essential teaching by casting it into figurative language. Her mother still stands ready, arms outstretched, to receive her back, and though she has grown old, her love and forgiveness remain today just as complete as they have always been. It will surely be an auspicious day when the mutual relationship between Hinduism and Jainism is fully understood, and it is hoped that the joyful reunion of mother and daughter will bring peace and happiness to all their kin.

--- Here ends [the main essay] ---

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Translator's notes: (  ) The verse cited in the original from the Brahmandapurana – asserting that Brahma first created the Puranas, and only afterward the Vedas, rites, dharma-shastras and rules – is offered by the author as internal Hindu testimony that the Puranas can, in principle, precede or run alongside the Vedas chronologically. (†) This closing charge – that the darshanas refute a strawman version of Jainism rather than the genuine doctrine – is a recurring theme of the book; the author returns to it in Footnote 5, in his critique of the category-lists (tattvas) of Samkhya, Nyaya and Vaisheshika philosophy.

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# The Vedic Deity Allegories

From *Sanatan Jain Dharma* (Champat Rai Jain, 1906) — cleaned Hindi text and

(This section explains how the author reads the principal Vedic gods — the Ashvin twins, the Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas, Indra, Prajapati, and finally the figure of Vishvakarma/Ahamkara/Ishvara — not as literal nature-deities but as allegorical figures representing powers and states of the soul (jiva). It follows directly on from the Agni–Indra–Surya discussion already given in the first document, and precedes the author's closing appeal for Hindu–Jain reconciliation.)

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Turning our attention to the other deities: the twin Ashvin Kumaras themselves appear to represent the two nadis (subtle channels), Ida and Pingala. They are said to be forever in motion, because the nature of prana (vital breath) is to be constantly moving. They are also credited with healing powers, both because respiration purifies the nadis, and because yogis hold that many bodily ailments are cured by the correct use of prana — the chief life-force, intimately bound up with the breath. In their ordinary sense, the Ashvins are cast as a personification of the individual vital air, one of whose names is *anila* (breath).

But among the deities, the most important number thirty-three: the eleven Rudras, the eight Vasus, the twelve Adityas, together with Indra and Prajapati.

The Rudras are transformations of those functions of life whose cessation is death. They are called Rudra (from *rud*, "to weep" — so named because at the time of death, the friends and family of the deceased are seen weeping) and they signify the soul's various vital powers.

The eight Vasus presumably represent the functions of the eight principal parts (limbs) of the body, called *angas*. According to some writers, the eight Vasus stand instead for eight locations, namely: (1) the earthly body, (2) the planets, (3) the atmosphere, (4) the celestial realm, (5) the sun, (6) the rays of the sky, (7) the satellites, and (8) the stars (see *The Terminology of the Vedas*, p. 55). But it is more likely that they represent the existing functions of the bodily limbs, since these are the various manifestations of the soul's own powers. One passage of the Atharva Veda (see *The Terminology of the Vedas*, p. 53) speaks of them as though they were various bodily functions, and, according to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the path revealing the thirty-three deities lies within the space of the heart (see *The Permanent History of India*, Vol. 1, p. 732).

We turn now to the Adityas, said to number twelve – though it is known that they were not always reckoned at that number. According to Mr. W. J. Wilkins (see *Hindu Mythology*, p. 18):

"This name (Aditya) simply denotes the offspring of Aditi. One Rig Vedic verse names six of them: (1) Mitra, (2) Aryaman, (3) Bhaga, (4) Varuna, (5) Daksha, and (6) Amsha. Another hymn gives their number as seven, though without naming them. A third passage mentions eight, but Aditi is said to have brought seven of her eight sons – born from her womb – before the gods, setting the eighth, Martanda, apart. Since the names of these sons differ across the various parts of the Vedas and do not agree with one another, it is difficult to establish exactly who the Adityas were. In the Shatapatha Brahmana and in the Puranas, their number is raised to twelve."

The Bhavishya Purana states (see *The Permanent History of India*, Vol. 1, pp. 481, 486) that the Adityas are so named because they were the first among the gods. According to certain other writers, the Adityas represent the twelve months of the solar year (see *The Terminology of the Vedas*, p. 55), and are called Aditya because they take (*adi*, "to take") everything in the world unto themselves. It is not easy to determine the precise meaning of this claim, but the closer conjecture is that the Adityas signify the primary (or original) qualities of the soul, whose pure state is symbolized by the sun – itself an excellent emblem of knowledge. So the Adityas, whatever their number (since that depends merely on how one chooses to classify them), are simply the functions of the soul connected with its principal faculty, namely knowledge. Thus Varuna – whose identification with a month of the solar year is somewhat absurd – is a symbol of the power of moral action (karma-shakti), since he "beholds the truth and falsehood of men" (*Hindu Mythology*, p. 36). Elsewhere Varuna's dominion is extended to embrace the entire universe, for he knows the paths of the winds by which birds fly across the sky, the courses of ships that sail the seas, and beholds all things that have been or will be. Varuna is held to be lord of the ocean, presumably because the ocean is itself the symbol of samsara (the round of transmigration). The remaining Adityas, likewise, cannot simply be months of the year, but may represent the various distinct qualities of the soul.

There now remain only Indra and Prajapati to be discussed. The former we have already described elsewhere; the latter is lord – that is, master – of *prajas* (progeny, and hence of the many activities of life), and is a symbol of the heart's governing function (see *The Permanent History of India*, Vol. 1, pp. 492–496).

The foregoing account is, in truth, quite sufficient to explain the entire Hindu pantheon, even though its deities are reckoned at no fewer than 330 million – for all the remaining gods of this divine lineage are simply mental offshoots of these central thirty-three, who can themselves ultimately be reduced to three, and finally to

one – namely, the soul itself in its supreme, worshipful, divine form. It will be seen that our explanation does more than merely resolve the inconsistency found in Mr. Gurudatta's interpretation, or the contrary inconsistency evident in the views of European philosophers – it also gives us a complete picture of the Hindu imaginative faculty at work in the proliferation of its deities. The many tangles and complications in the genealogy of these gods, which have so vexed modern scholarly researchers, are easily resolved once their origin in the imaginative faculty is recognized – for, since the various functions of life shade continuously into one another, it was inevitable that, from time to time, the symbols devised for their origin would come to display, in their mutual relationships, features so inconsistent as to appear obscure – and therefore difficult – to the ordinary observer. It will be found that a "pure" deity is sometimes reckoned as the father of his own father, and, at other times, as the contemporary of his own begetters – such bewildering tales are not a peculiarity of Hinduism alone, but are found in the mysticism and esoteric teaching of every faith, as in the Christian doctrine of the Father and the Son (God and Christ) being simultaneous. Their meaning becomes clear and simple once the philosophical root (source) of these figures is traced; otherwise they remain a source of error and confusion.

Anyone who wishes to discover the distinction between eternal governance and the lordship of the gods must first grasp the purpose of the doctrine of nayavada (standpoints),† without which the key of understanding cannot turn in the rust-caked locks of mysticism that have stood shut for centuries. He must then take the bundle of his own private beliefs and cherished opinions and cast it far from himself, and only then enter the sacred precincts of those powers which shape the destinies of suffering beings. Only in this way will he arrive at the true nature of reality, and escape becoming a victim of delusion and bias. The perceptive reader will now understand that the soul – which, through the senses, enjoys material things – appears, in the imagined transformation called Indra, as the offspring of Vayu and Prithvi (soul-substance and matter); and yet, at the same time, it is "the father of its own fathers," in the sense that the Siddhatman – the liberated soul – is nothing but the remaining, impurity-free portion of the very same soul that was once impure. That this notion is not, in every strict particular, scientifically exact does not weaken the truth of the explanation, for our purpose here is only to reveal the underlying meaning of the mysticism, not to certify its details as scientifically demonstrated fact.

In general, it will be seen that the presence of contradiction and inconsistency within a body of mystical teaching is itself a firm indication that results obtained from differing standpoints have been mixed together in violation of the discipline of nayavada. There can therefore be no objection to saying that whatever is found in a religion that runs contrary to reason and intelligence is not, in fact, a description of any real thing – whether that thing be a person or a natural event – but is, in truth, a mental fabrication, forged, on the basis of some ordinary principle, in the workshop of

a highly fertile imaginative faculty. Among the post-Vedic ideas, the one now current not merely among Hindus but among three-quarters of mankind — namely, the notion of a creator and ruling God — offers the best example of this rule. The particular strand of thought on which this notion was built is, presumably, the figure of Vishvakarma, the divine craftsman of the gods — itself a metaphor for the seer-poets' reflections on the shaping of forms, that is, on the natural constitution of things. It appears that the Hindu mind, growing bewildered at the diversity in the natural workings of substances, finally concluded that there must be some cause even for the functioning of substance itself; and, failing to find any rational basis for this vague and hazy notion, it fashioned and fixed in place a new kind of power called Adrishta ("the unseen" — that is, not [a-] + seen [drishta] = hence "unknown"). Under the same tendency toward allegory that had already produced the pantheon and the origin of the gods, this Adrishta too came, in time, to be adorned with divine attributes; and since, from the outset, it was regarded as the source of the functions of all the other gods, and hence as mightier than all of them — that is, as Ishvara (Ishvara being "one who possesses aishvarya," that is, sovereign power or lordship) — it eventually became famed throughout the world as the unmanifest Maheshvara (Great Lord). Having attained the highest place in the Hindu pantheon, this Adrishta began to extend its dominion across the Hindu world, and, like some of its predecessor-deities, soon established its currency in other lands as well, where it came to be regarded as the author of all things, good and bad alike.

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Translator's notes: (†) "Nayavada" (the doctrine of standpoints/ partial viewpoints) is a core Jain epistemological principle — the idea that any statement about reality is true only from a particular standpoint, and that confusing or mixing standpoints produces the appearance of contradiction. The author invokes it throughout as his interpretive key for resolving apparent inconsistencies in Vedic mythology. ( ) "Described elsewhere" refers back to the author's earlier treatment of Indra as a symbol of the soul as "lord and enjoyer of matter," given together with the Agni–Surya discussion in the main text.

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Footnotes 1–5
From Sanatan Jain Dharma (Champat Rai Jain, 1906) — cleaned Hindi text and

(The main essay ends with "इति." The author then appends five long footnotes referenced at various points in the body text. Footnote 2 contains, partway through, the Ashvin/Rudra/Vasu/Aditya/Indra/ Prajapati/Vishvakarma material already given in a separate document (`vedic_deity_allegories.md`); that portion is not repeated here — this file gives the opening argument of Footnote 2 (the Gurudatta/

Max Müller translation comparison) and the rest.)

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फुटनोट न० १ — पर्वत–नारद विवाद और महाकाल पिशाचकी कथा

The following account of the reinterpretation of this custom is found in the Jain Puranas:—

Once, long ago, in the kingdom of King Vasu, a dispute arose between the sage Narada and his fellow-disciple Parvata over the meaning of the word "aja," used in the worship of the gods. This word has two meanings today: three-year-old grain that can no longer sprout, and "goat." Parvata, who was presumably fond of eating meat, insisted that the word meant "goat," while Narada upheld the older meaning. The assembly's opinion, ancient custom, and the force of his opponent's arguments all went against Parvata, but he brought the matter before the king, who happened to be his own father's disciple. To win the king's favor for Parvata, Parvata's mother went secretly to the palace and asked the king to grant her husband's old teaching-fee (guru-dakshina), demanding whatever boon she wished. King Vasu, having no idea what would be asked of him, gave his word. Parvata's mother then told him to decide in Parvata's favor, and although Vasu tried to go back on his promise, she stopped him and would not let him break his word. The next day the matter was brought before the king, who ruled in Parvata's favor. For this, Vasu was destroyed (swallowed into the earth), and Parvata was driven from the capital in disgrace. But he vowed to gather his strength and spread his teaching regardless.

While Parvata was still pondering what to do, a demon (pishacha) came to him from the netherworld, disguised as a Brahmin sage. This demon, who gave his name to Parvata as the sage Shandilya, had in a former life been a prince named Madhupingala, who had been cheated by a rival and deprived of his beloved bride. The story goes that Madhupingala had every chance of being chosen by garland at Princess Sushila's svayamvara (self-choice ceremony), since her mother had already privately promised her to him. His rival, Sagara, learned of this secret arrangement and, blinded by love for Sushila, told his minister that he wished some scheme devised to win the princess. This wicked minister fabricated a false treatise on palmistry and had it secretly buried beneath the svayamvara pavilion; and when the assembled princes had taken their seats, he treacherously claimed, through astrology, that an ancient text lay buried beneath the pavilion. In short, the forged document was dug up, and the minister was asked by the assembly to read it aloud.

He began to read the treatise, and soon came to the passage describing the eyes for which Madhupingala was especially renowned. With great satisfaction, this enemy of Madhupingala read out, word

for word, and with heavy emphasis, the fabricated palmistry text's claim that such eyes were a mark of misfortune, and that their possessor would be luckless, ill-fated, and a bad omen for friends and family. Poor Madhupingala burst into tears and left the assembly. Defeated, grieved and humiliated by this deceit, he tore his clothes, renounced the world, and took up the life of an ascetic. At that point Sushila entered the svayamvara and chose Sagara as her husband.

Some time later, Madhupingala learned from a palmist acquaintance that he had been deceived, and that he had been separated from his intended bride through fraud and injustice. In the rage that overcame him upon discovering this deception, he took his own life. Upon death he was reborn in the netherworld as a demon (pishacha), where he came to full awareness of the deception done to him in his former life, and began plotting revenge against his enemies from there. He made his way into the land of wicked men, and there encountered Parvata just as Parvata, driven out of Vasu's kingdom, was wondering how to spread his new (revised) meaning of the word "aja" throughout the world. Recognizing Parvata as a capable and willing accomplice for taking revenge on his own enemy, he promised to assist Parvata in accomplishing his wicked scheme. Under this ill-omened pact between man and demon, it was agreed that Parvata would go to Sagara's city, where Mahakala (this was the demon's true name) would spread every kind of disease and epidemic – ailments which Parvata would then appear to cure by his own methods, so that his reputation might rise among the people to whom he wished to spread his teaching. The demon fulfilled his part of the bargain, and Parvata found the people afflicted with every kind of terrible disease, which he then proceeded to cure, apparently with great success, through his mantras. But in that ill-fated kingdom, for every disease that was cured, two new ones would spring up in its place – until the people came to believe that they were suffering the wrath of the gods, and turned to Parvata, now regarded as their chief protector, for advice. Some time thus passed, and at last it was judged that the moment was ripe to introduce the new practice of sacrifice. At first, the sacrifice of living creatures met with fierce opposition; but the long accumulation of unrelenting suffering, together with Parvata's now unrivaled reputation – which had risen to the level of veneration – and above all the faith that his seemingly miraculous powers had inspired in the people (a faith actually grounded in his real record of apparent success), finally brought even the faint-hearted to comply with his instructions.

At first, meat was given as medicine for various ailments, and it never failed to produce a hopeful result. What Parvata had been unable to establish by argument, he now succeeded, with his demon accomplice's help, in establishing through this practical demonstration. Gradually his following grew steadily larger – until, once Parvata had convinced people that sacrifice caused the animal no suffering at all but sent it straight to heaven, the Ajamedha (goat-sacrifice) was performed. Here too reliance was placed on Mahakala's powers, and they did not fail: the very moment the sacrificial animal began to writhe and cry out beneath the sacred

knife, Mahakala, by his magical power, produced the illusion of a goat being carried off, joyful and content, to heaven in a flying chariot. Nothing more was needed to convince the deluded people of Sagara's kingdom. After the Ajamedha came the Gomedha (cow-sacrifice), after the Gomedha the Ashvamedha (horse-sacrifice), and finally the Purushamedha (human sacrifice) was also celebrated with great pomp, each producing its own hoped-for result. At every sacrifice, the victim – animal or human – was likewise shown ascending to heaven. As time went on, the natural revulsion people had originally felt toward meat-eating and the killing of living beings gradually faded, until at last sacrifice itself came to be regarded as the most direct path to heaven for the victim. An explanation of this practice was duly worked into the sacrificial scriptures composed at that time, and people's hearts came to hold such reverence for these rites that many, joyfully believing they would thereby reach heaven at once, offered themselves up as sacrificial victims. In the end, even Sushila and her deceitful admirer Sagara came forward to offer their own sacrifices to please the gods, and were slain upon the altar.

The demon's vow was now fulfilled; having taken his revenge, he returned to the netherworld. With his departure, much of the illusory power behind the sacrifices faded, but since he took the diseases and epidemics away with him as well, people at first paid this no attention. As the newly established claim that "the sacrificial victim goes straight to heaven" proved false, people began to explain the failure as due to some flaw in the recitation of the sacred mantras, or in the precise pronunciation used at the time of sacrifice, or to some other such cause. Meanwhile, a complete ritual manual for the officiating priests (hotas) had also been prepared, along with a full code of ritual conduct that took even the smallest details into careful account. Presumably, some of the mantras from the ancient (Rig Vedic) period were also altered in line with the teachings of Parvata and his disciples. This new teaching spread far beyond Sagara's capital, and even after the demon's own departure to his native realm, the powers the priests had acquired through practices such as mesmerism and yogic discipline – into which they appear to have been well initiated – proved sufficient to keep people drawn to Parvata's wicked doctrine.

When we find this account confirmed in the words of the Hindu scriptures themselves, our confidence in the truth of the origin of violence described above, in the Jain scriptures, is strengthened. See, for instance, the Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, chapter 336, which reads as follows:

King Uparichara of the Chedi dynasty had a son named Vasu, who was a devout Vaishnava and a most beloved friend of Indra, lord of heaven. Indra had granted him a sky-going chariot, upon which he would almost always travel through the air – hence his name Uparichara ("sky-wanderer"). At some point in the Satya Yuga, a fierce dispute arose between the sacrificing sages and the gods. The dispute was this: the sages, regarding the killing of animals as sinful, performed sacrifice using only grain and seeds. The gods, displeased

with this practice, came to the sages one day and said: "Learned sages! What is this you are doing? According to the scripture, 'ajair yashtavyam' – sacrifice ought to be performed with a goat." The sages replied: "This cannot be so; the killing of animals is itself sin. According to the Vedic text 'bijair yashtavyam,' sacrifice ought to be performed with seed (bija). Even in the very scripture you cite, the word 'aja' refers only to grain, not to an animal." But the gods refused to accept this. They marshaled many arguments and proofs, striving to establish their own view. The sages were their equal; they too marshaled arguments and proofs to refute the gods' position and establish their own. The dispute dragged on for many days, with much verbal contention, but no decision could be reached as to which view was correct. At this point King Uparichara happened to be passing by. Both sides placed the matter in his hands, asking him to decide which view was superior. The king, favoring the gods, ruled in their favor. Enraged, the sages cursed the king. It was because of this curse that the king was seen descending, chariot and all, into the underworld – a sight that filled the gods with great shame. They advised the king to worship Vishnu, and ordained that thereafter, in auspicious rites, an offering of "vasordhara" (a stream of clarified butter) should be made – which is why the Bhrigu lineage holds Vasu dear. Even today the custom of offering "vasordhara" persists at weddings and other auspicious ceremonies. In the course of time, Vishnu released him [from this fate].
( Hindi Vishwakosh [Hindi Encyclopedia], Vol. 7, p. 493)

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फुटनोट नं० २ (आरम्भिक भाग) – मि० गुरुदत्तकी वेदार्थ-समीक्षा

To assess more precisely the merit and value of his interpretation of the Vedas, let us examine the treatment of Agni and Indra found among the Arya Samajists – specifically, that of Mr. Gurudatta, a follower of Swami Dayananda and the well-known author of The Terminology of the Vedas , according to whom these figures represent, respectively, heat, or the science of horse-training, and the governing class. Mr. Gurudatta rejects the competence of Western scholars such as Max Müller, and argues that errors have crept into their translations because they mistook ordinary words for proper names. It should be noted that European scholars based their translations on the commentaries of Hindu exegetes such as Mahidhara and Sayana; Mr. Gurudatta, by contrast, follows Yaska, the author of the Nirukta, who insists on interpreting every word solely in its etymological (yaugika) sense. We have already sufficiently criticized the European interpretation, and shall therefore now assess the merit of Mr. Gurudatta's method by comparing it with Professor Max Müller's translation. The verses we have chosen for this comparison are the very ones Mr. Gurudatta himself selected for the purpose – the first three verses of Rig Veda hymn 1.162. Both

translations are given in *The Terminology of the Vedas*, as follows:

Mr. Gurudatta:

1. "We will not describe the strength-producing qualities of the swift horses, endowed with brilliant properties, nor will we describe the propulsive power of heat, which wise and scientifically skilled men make use of in their devices (not in sacrifice)."

2. "Those who teach that wealth earned only through good deeds should be accumulated and spent, and who have attained wisdom, who are skilled in debating the science of matter with others and in correcting the foolish – only they, and such other guardians of strength and power, are worshipped for the sake of their governance."

3. "The virtuous goat, full of beneficial qualities, gives milk that is a nourishing food for the horse; the finest grain becomes useful only when prepared into a tasty dish by a skilled cook, in accordance with proper knowledge of the qualities of foodstuffs."

Professor Max Müller:

1. "May Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Ayu, Indra, the lord of the Ribhus, and the Maruts not rebuke us, for we shall proclaim in the assembly the virtues of the swift horse sprung from the gods.

2. "When they lead the consecrated horse, adorned with solid gold ornaments, in front, firmly grasping the offering, the dappled goat bleats as it walks ahead – it walks the road dear to Indra and Pushan.

3. "This goat, offering-portion of Pushan, dedicated to all the gods, is led forth first, together with the swift horse, for Tvashtri himself lends glory to the welcome offering that is brought together with the horse."

The words we have set in bold will be clear to anyone who bears in mind Swami Dayananda's claim that the above hymn "describes the science of horse-training (Ashva-vidya), and is concerned, like a scientific treatise, with the universal science of heat" (see *The Terminology of the Vedas*, p. 38). Unfortunately, no argument has been offered to demonstrate or establish any actual connection between this "science of horses" – that is, culinary skill – and the meaning claimed for it.

Nor, in fact, is there any real skill evident in the rival (traditional) interpretation, if read purely literally. But its contextual fitness is clear, since it accords with an existing, ongoing practice that has undoubtedly come down from very ancient times.

It is certainly true that the meanings of Vedic technical terms are almost always etymological, differing from the conventional usage whose sense is freely construed according to preference. But it is

equally true that presumably the entire vocabulary of the Sanskrit language is full of words that derive, according to the principal rules, from root verbs. This applies especially to proper nouns, and is most evident in personal names – as with Rama, meaning "one who gives delight," or "one who is joyful and pleasing." Thus it is always possible to raise some doubt or other about the meaning of any given word, but it is well known that no satisfactory result can be obtained by this method alone. In many cases, etymology will indeed shed adequate light on a word's meaning, but very often, in order to arrive at the true sense, it will be necessary to rely also on the customary or well-established meaning. Even so, we must be careful not to stubbornly destroy contextual fitness merely to defend our own pet theory. It would therefore not be correct to say that Indra always signifies the governing class and nothing else, or that Agni is never anything but "horse-science" or heat, and so on. There is no doubt that Agni, in the sense of heat, and Indra, in the sense of the ruling class, do not deserve to have so very many Vedic verses devoted to them – especially since their supposed opposites, cold and any comparably ruled class, find no place at all in the Vedic pantheon. There are many other sciences, occupations, qualities, and methods of animal training that are, by Mr. Gurudatta's own logic, no less important or useful than Agni and Indra, yet we find no Vedic hymn devoted to them. Neither "horse-science," nor the governance-related useful matter falling under the six categories – namely (1) time, (2) place, (3) power, (4) the human soul, (5) intentional action, (6) vital functions – described in *The Terminology of the Vedas* (see pp. 53–54), despite the fact that Mr. Gurudatta devised this very classification specifically to settle the identity of the Vedic gods, can be regarded as sound, whether scientifically or philosophically. Heat may well belong to the category of forces, as indeed it does, but its claim to precedence over the other natural forces of its kind remains yet to be proven.

We are therefore compelled to conclude that Agni and Indra, described as deities in the Vedic hymns, do not signify heat, horse-science, or the ruling class, but rather stand for certain qualities or aspects of the soul.

(The remainder of this footnote – the author's allegorical treatment of the Ashvin twins, the eleven Rudras, the eight Vasus, the twelve Adityas, Indra, Prajapati, and Vishvakarma/Adrishta/Ishvara – has already been given, cleaned and translated, in the separate document `vedic_deity_allegories.md`.)

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फुटनोट नं० ३ – बृहदारण्यकका अश्वमेध-रूपक

For comparison, read the relevant passage from Deussen's *The*

System of the Vedanta  (Charles Johnston's , p. 8):—

"...it is true that in the Aranyakas we frequently find a remarkable tendency to shift the meaning of sacrifice from its literal performance toward figurative reflection upon it — a tendency that leads, by degrees, toward the highest ideas. Take, for example, the opening passage of the Brihadaranyaka (intended for the Adhvaryu priest), which describes the horse-sacrifice (Ashvamedha):

"'Om! The head of the sacrificial horse is the dawn; the sun is his eye; the wind is his breath; his open mouth is the universal fire (Vaishvanara Agni); the body of the sacrificial horse is the year; his back is heaven, his belly the atmosphere, his hoof the earth, his sides the quarters, his ribs the intermediate quarters, his members the seasons, his joints the months and half-months, his feet the day and night, his bones the stars, his flesh the clouds. His half-digested food is the sand, his intestines the rivers, his liver and lungs the mountains, his hair the plants and trees. His forequarter is the rising sun, his hindquarter the setting sun. When he yawns, it lightens; when he shakes himself, it thunders; when he stales, it rains. His neighing is speech itself. The day, indeed, was the vessel that was held before the horse — its origin was in the eastern sea. The night was the vessel held behind him — its origin was in the western sea. These two vessels arose to encompass him on both sides. As a charger he carried the gods, as a stallion the Gandharvas, as a courser the Asuras, as a horse men. The sea is his kin, the sea is his birthplace.'

"Here the world is set in place of the sacrificial horse — probably conveying the idea that the yogi ought to renounce the world (see Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.3.1-2), just as a dog's offspring abandons the actual rites of sacrifice. In the very same way, the Chandogya Upanishad (chapter I, section 2), intended for the Udgatri priest, gives instruction couched as though addressed to the true Udgatri. The syllable Om is treated as the foundation of the triple Brahman (a symbol of the Supreme Self), and reverence for it is likewise given a shifted meaning in that hymn's connection with the 'hotri' priest in the Aitareya Aranyaka (2.1.2). Compare also Brahma Sutra 3.3.55-56, where this same tendency is confirmed — namely, that such marked allegorical figures (metaphors) are found not merely within particular schools, but quite generally throughout."

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फुटनोट नं॰ ४ — द्रौपदी, इन्द्र, अहल्या और सूर्यके अलंकार

An example of this kind of allegory may be found in the figure of Draupadi, who, according to the Mahabharata, was the wife of all five Pandava brothers. The Digambara Jain teachers, in their Puranas, dispute this account, maintaining that she was the wife of

Arjuna alone, who won her by his skill at her svayamvara. It is, of course, quite unbelievable that men whose sense of right and wrong stood as high as the Pandavas' should have been so degraded as to compel her into a marriage with five husbands at once. The truth is that the author of the great epic reshaped historical events to suit his allegorical purposes, leaving it to the reader's intelligence to uncover the true meaning. The young Draupadi's bold entry into the household of all five Pandava brothers bears so striking a resemblance to the relationship between life (jiva) and the five senses of knowledge that it can hardly be doubted the author of the Mahabharata, a man of exceptional intellect, had this very allegory in mind – casting Draupadi at once into his great drama of war, itself a grand allegory of the war between the soul's natural and karmic powers, and of the complete defeat of the latter (see The Permanent History of Bharatavarsha , K. P. Jain, Vol. 2).

Thus, while the historical Draupadi was regarded as a daughter by Yudhishthira and Bhima, her husband's elder brothers, and as a mother by the younger Nakula and Sahadeva, her allegorical double – the symbolic Draupadi – became wife to all five, in order to represent the bond between the soul's vital force and its five senses. According to another related story, Surya (a symbol of the pure soul) gave her a wondrous vessel (a cooking-pot) from which any food or other object she wished would appear. This wish-granting vessel is explained as signifying that the soul is, by nature, complete in itself and independent of external aid. The fact that the wicked Duhshasana proved unable to expose Draupadi's beauty before the assembly, however much cloth he stripped from her miraculously extending garment, sheds light on the nature of the soul (jiva) – for the soul, in its bound state (symbolized by Draupadi's endless robe), remains so thoroughly wrapped in layer upon layer of delusion (maya-moha) that its naked, true form can never be exposed.

Another beautiful allegory of the soul's condition is found in the Japanese tale of Lady Arundhati [sic – likely a garbled reference], whose five suitors symbolize the five senses, all of whom deceive her by offering false and inferior things in place of the real objects she desires and seeks; and the Mikado is the outer self (the physical person), whom she leaves behind as she departs for the lunar realm (the realm of the ancestors) together with its inhabitants.

Draupadi ought to be distinguished from Indra, who is another allegory of the embodied soul (jivatma). The difference between the two figures is that, while Draupadi represents the relationship between vital force and the senses of knowledge, Indra's symbolic scope is considerably broader. If Indra's biography is taken as that of a historical person or a living deity, it is more than enough to provoke revulsion regarding Hindu morality, civilization, and the character of their gods – for not only did he violate Ahalya, the wife of his own teacher Gautama, but Brahma (Pitamaha), rather than punishing him, actually transformed the marks of his sin (the boils that covered his body) into eyes at Indra's own request, thereby

making him even more beautiful. But the literal meaning of this story has no connection with real history, and it suggests that its author possessed a deep understanding of the science of the soul and an unmatched gift for allegorical poetry. To fully appreciate the figurative language used in connection with this allegory, it is necessary to bear in mind the Hindu conception of creation, which, according to Samkhya doctrine, arises from the union of Purusha (spirit) and Prakriti (matter).

Here, however, our concern is not with the Samkhya theory of cosmic evolution, but with how individual souls (jivatmas) are said to arise from Purusha, as described in the following passage from the authoritative Hindu text, the Yoga Vasishtha:

"Just as a Brahmin, fallen from his high estate, becomes a Shudra, so too does Ishvara fall into the state of jiva. Thousands of jivas will flash into being at every instant. Through the vibration of that generative thought, embodied gods (jiva-ishvaras) will descend at every moment. But the cause of this is not karma [performed in this world]. O Rama! This is a relationship of cause and effect which is, in itself, not a cause of the origination of jivas – for existence and karma are mutually causative of one another. All jivas arise from the state of Ishvara without [external] cause, but after their origination, it is their own karmas that become the cause of their pleasure and pain. And the will (sankalpa), which itself arises from maya through ignorance of self-knowledge, is the cause of all karma."

This Hindu conception concerns the multiplication of the One into the many; and although this view is flawed, and represents an external device for escaping the difficulties that arise from confusing ordinary mental qualities – that is, attributes – with the substances in which they inhere, it is nevertheless necessary to bear it in mind in order to grasp the underlying sense of Hindu conceptions concerning Indra and the other gods.

In interpreting the story of Indra's violation of his teacher's wife Ahalya, it is worth knowing that the union of soul and matter (pudgala) is, in principle, strictly forbidden – for liberation (moksha) itself consists precisely in the separation of the one from the other! The soul's entry into matter is thus a forbidden act, and is for this reason termed "adultery." Now since matter (pudgala) is the primary object of the intellect's knowledge – the intellect being the soul's own teacher (guru) – the union of soul and matter becomes, allegorically, adultery with the teacher's wife. The result of the soul's entry into an inseparable union with matter is the production of countless jivas (as described in the Yoga Vasishtha passage above), each of which becomes embodied in material atoms and, owing to the darkening influence of delusion, resembles a boil or a pustule. But these jivas, in due course, attain self-realization through the soul's knowledge and faith (allegorically described as the worship of Brahma, i.e., of God), and thereby regain perfection and omniscience – hence they are said to be "transformed into eyes."

Indra is also said to be very fond of soma-juice, which bears a superficial resemblance to the doctrine of intoxicating liquors. This is a kind of "wine" that delights without intoxicating, and is a symbol of the soul's own natural bliss.

Indra's vehicle is the elephant, a creature of great size and strength, and hence a symbol of matter (pudgala). The point of this symbolism is that the soul cannot move of its own accord, but can move only with the help of matter. This idea is further elaborated in the description of the elephant itself, which is said to have three trunks emerging from a single head – a threefold symbol undoubtedly devised to express an allegorical meaning, since the three trunks stand for the three qualities (gunas) of matter – sattva, rajas, and tamas – which, according to Samkhya doctrine, are the fundamental qualities underlying Prakriti (primal matter). The soul's power of awareness and expansion – its principal quality – is shown to increase when Indra is exalted, and to contract into an extremely subtle form, hidden within the lotus (the sahasrara chakra) at the top of the staff (presumably the spinal column), when it is separated from smallness (i.e., from purity or merit).

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फुटनोट नं० ५ – षड्दर्शनोंकी तत्व–गणनाकी समालोचना

A little reflection will show that these systems of philosophy (darshanas) are neither optimally constructed nor marked by scientific or doctrinal rigor. From the very outset they lose sight of the principle of nayavada (the doctrine of relative standpoints), and reveal their own uncertainty through the sheer variety and remoteness of the kinds of proof they invoke. Their enumeration of categories (tattvas) is likewise unscientific and confused.

Even learned Hindus themselves, viewed from a strictly doctrinal standpoint, have been compelled to admit that not one of their six systems is entirely sound. The following passage, quoted from the introduction to the ninth volume of the Sacred Books of the Hindus , is a fair sample of Hindu opinion on this point:

"He (Vijnanabhikshu, a celebrated commentator on Samkhya philosophy) knew that none of the six systems... as we have said before, was, in the Western sense, a systematic philosophy at all, but rather resembled a set of catechetical dialogues, in which certain doctrines of the Vedas and Upanishads concerning the origin of the universe were set out, in the form of debate, for a particular class of pupils... without ever explaining to them the fundamental matters of the world, which, owing to their own mental and spiritual deficiencies, they were not capable of understanding."

The writer of this introduction undoubtedly tries to excuse the flaws of Hindu doctrine by appealing to the immaturity of its pupils' intelligence, but in the absence of any evidence proving the teacher's own complete knowledge, such an explanation must be regarded as motivated by faith rather than reason. We are not concerned here with the accuracy of this defense, but with the merit of the underlying doctrine itself – and on the question of its adequacy there are clear and pressing objections.

Nor is there any agreement among these systems as to the valid means of knowledge (pramanas). According to the Vaisheshikas, only direct perception and inference count as valid proof; the Naiyayikas add verbal testimony (agama) and analogy (upamana) to these two; and the Mimamsakas include, in addition, presumption (arthapatti) and sometimes non-perception (anupalabdhi). But analogy, properly speaking, is nothing more than a kind of pseudo-inference, and both presumption and non-perception are already implicit in valid inference. The remaining three – direct perception, inference, and verbal testimony – are generally regarded as the chief means of valid knowledge, even though the Vaisheshikas reject verbal testimony, holding that only trustworthy scripture can open the door to knowledge of things beyond both perception and inference. Samkhya philosophy, to be sure, accepts all three means of knowledge, but it simply takes the infallibility of the Vedas for granted, and its methods of inference include analogy as well – as in the example that all your trees must be in bloom, because one tree is seen to be in bloom (see Mr. Tirtharam Tatia's  of the Samkhya Karika, p. 30). By this logic, seeing one dog's tail could lead to the conclusion that all dogs wag their tails.

We turn now to the question of categories (tattvas), without a correct determination of which no system or religion can succeed. By "tattva" is meant precisely those fundamental principles or laws by which a subject of inquiry is studied; and their determination must proceed on rational grounds – not haphazardly, but according to genuinely scientific considerations of relevance – since the purpose and aim of religion is the spiritual advancement, and ultimately the liberation, of living beings. Its inquiry must therefore serve to determine the qualities of the soul and the causes that deprive it of its natural freedom and power, as well as those that fit it for the attainment of perfection. The true categories are, for this reason, exactly those set forth in Jain doctrine – namely jiva (soul), ajiva (non-soul), and so on; all others are pseudo-categories which, though dressed in the garb of tattvas, are in reality false.

Bearing these points in mind, let us judge how far the six systems succeeded in identifying the true categories. Samkhya philosophy sets out the following twenty-five tattvas:

1. Purusha (soul/spirit)
2. Prakriti, comprising the three gunas: sattva (intelligence), rajas (activity), tamas (inertia/grossness)
3. Mahat, which arises from the union of Purusha and Prakriti

4. Ahamkara (ego-sense)
5–9. The five sense-organs of knowledge
10–14. The five organs of action – hands, feet, speech, the organ of generation, the organ of excretion
15–19. The five kinds of sensory stimuli – touch, taste, etc., corresponding to the five senses
20. Mind (manas)
21–25. The five gross elements – space, air, fire, water, earth

Of these, only the first two are eternal; the remaining twenty-three evolve from their union. This enumeration hardly deserves intellectual admiration, for even a semblance of true "category-ness" is barely visible in the first two. It fails to take account of great fundamental entities such as time and space, while giving separate status to comparatively ordinary things such as the organs of action. Nor is it clear on what basis these particular items were selected, since many equally essential functions – digestion, blood circulation, and the like – are left out entirely. Though this system is regarded as a scientific and fully rational account of karma, transmigration, and liberation, no real attempt is made to explain any of these; and the entire department of spiritual science appears anomalous when cast in the form of "categories" at all.

The Naiyayikas recognize the following sixteen categories:

1. Pramana (means of valid knowledge)
2. Prameya (objects of knowledge)
3. Samshaya (doubt)
4. Prayojana (purpose)
5. Drishtanta (example)
6. Siddhanta (established tenet)
7. Avayava (members of a syllogism)
8. Tarka (hypothetical reasoning)
9. Nirnaya (ascertainment)
10. Vada (debate)
11. Jalpa (wrangling)
12. Vitanda (cavil)
13. Hetvabhasa (fallacy)
14. Chhala (quibbling)
15. Jati (futile rejoinder)
16. Nigrahasthana (point of defeat)

Here too, a glance suffices to show that these categories can, at best, teach logic. But logic is certainly not religion, however useful a branch of knowledge it may be, on a par with grammar, mathematics, and the other sciences. If the rules of logic can be called "categories," then we would equally have to call the parts of grammar – noun, verb, and so forth – and the rules of mathematics "categories" too, which is plainly absurd. The Naiyayikas try to avoid this difficulty by including, under their second category (Prameya), twelve kinds of objects: (1) the soul, (2) the body, (3) the sense-organs of knowledge, (4) objects (comprising form, taste, smell, and touch), (5) intellect, (6) mind, (7) activity (through speech, mind, or body), (8) fault (meaning attachment, aversion,

false knowledge, or delusion), (9) rebirth, (10) fruit (result or consequence), (11) suffering, and (12) liberation (release from suffering).

But the result is a considerable muddle, since the second category, Prameya, concerns all knowable objects, and hence all existing things whatsoever – so it cannot possibly be confined to just twelve items. That this classification is inherently unsound is evident from the fact that it pays no attention whatever to such crucial matters as asrava, bandha, samvara, and nirjara, while placing excessive emphasis on comparatively unimportant matters like touch and taste. Establishing jalpa, vitanda, and chhala as separate categories (even setting aside jati) is a glaring example of sheer intellectual carelessness.

The Vaisheshikas list the following categories:

1. Dravya (substance)
2. Guna (quality)
3. Karma (action)
4. Samanya (generality)
5. Vishesha (particularity)
6. Samavaya (inherence)
7. Abhava (non-existence)

But this is not a genuine enumeration of categories at all; it is, rather, a classification akin to methods of grouping and sorting things. Even the worthy author of the introduction to Kanada's Vaisheshika Sutras, published by Major B. D. Basu, felt it his honest duty to apologize to the reader for the flaws of this system. He writes:

"The Vaisheshika system views things from one particular and wholly fixed perspective. This is the outlook of those for whom Kanada's teachings were intended. For this reason it is not so much a fully independent system of thought as it is an elaboration or application – in terms of the instruments of its own origin – of the teachings of the Vedic and other ancient sages who lived before Kanada's time."

The Vaisheshika enumeration of categories may fairly be said to begin with the division into substance, quality, and action. Substances are said to be of nine kinds: (1–4) the atoms of the four elements – earth, water, fire, and air; (5) ether (akasha); (6) time; (7) space (dik); (8) the individual soul; (9) mind. The qualities (gunas) are as follows: form, taste, smell, touch, number, magnitude, separateness, conjunction, disjunction, priority, posteriority, knowledge, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and effort. Sound, however, is said to be a quality of ether. Action (karma) is of five kinds: throwing upward, throwing downward, contraction, expansion, and motion. Such is the classification of substance, quality, and action given by the Vaisheshikas, but here too we find no genuine attempt to identify true categories. The whole scheme is exceedingly uncertain and haphazard, and the overall

result is defective. The classification of actions is meaningless, and the description of qualities excessive and irregular. Air, water, fire, and earth are not four distinct substances at all, but four different forms of a single substance, namely matter (pudgala); and sound is not a quality of "God" (ether) but a kind of vibration produced by the movement of material particles. Nor is it in any way logical to regard mind as a wholly new kind of substance, since mind is nothing other than the interaction of soul and matter – no separate entity in its own right.

Thus the six celebrated systems of Hindu philosophy present ill-founded and poorly reasoned views, and cannot properly be called fully self-consistent. Nor are the remaining three – Yoga, Vedanta, and Jaimini's Mimamsa – in any better condition on this score. They too are not grounded on a sound basis of categories, and so need not detain us further here.

In recent times, certain people have placed excessive importance on the doctrine of Vedanta, which teaches that mere knowledge of Brahman suffices to attain the state of Brahman. But the Vedantin cannot explain why, having known Brahman, he has not thereby already become Brahman. Had this doctrine rested on a scientifically sound basis, it would have recognized that knowledge and attainment are two distinct things, even though knowledge is indeed indispensable as the starting point for realizing the soul's highest ideal. Here too Jainism instructs us that the true path consists of right faith (samyag-darshana), right knowledge (samyag-jnana), and right conduct (samyak-charitra) together, and that none of these alone constitutes the path. Patanjali, likewise, exhausts his energies describing generalities, without being able to explain the true nature and bondage of the soul, nor can he demonstrate, in cause-and-effect terms, how his own prescribed path actually removes the unfortunate union of soul and matter that he teaches his followers to overcome.

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